United Nations S/PV.6251

Security Council

Sixty-fourth year

Provisional

6251st meeting

Monday, 21 December 2009, 11.10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Kafando	(Burkina Faso)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Ebner
	China	Mr. Zhang Yesui
	Costa Rica	Mr. Artiñano
	Croatia	Mr. Vilović
	France	Mr. Araud
	Japan	Mr. Takasu
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Shalgham
	Mexico	Mr. Heller
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Turkey	Mr. Apakan
	Uganda	Mr. Rugunda
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. DiCarlo
	Viet Nam	Mr. Le Luong Minh

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan

Letter dated 17 November 2009 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2009/599)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

09-66048 (E)

Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 11.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan

Letter dated 17 November 2009 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2009/599)

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to His Excellency Mr. Jean Ping, Chairperson of the African Union Commission.

It is so decided.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to His Excellency Mr. Thabo Mbeki, Chairperson of the African Union High-Level Panel on Darfur.

It is so decided.

The Council welcomes Mr. Jean Ping and the members of his delegation, including Mr. Thabo Mbeki, former President of South Africa, and Mr. Pierre Buyoya, former President of Burundi.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I wish to draw the attention of the members of the Council to document S/2009/599, which contains a letter dated 17 November 2009 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council, transmitting the report of the African Union High-Level Panel on Darfur.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Jean Ping, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, and Mr. Thabo Mbeki, Chairperson of the African Union High-Level Panel on Darfur.

I warmly welcome the presence of the Secretary-General and invite him to take the floor.

The Secretary-General: I am honoured to be here today and to welcome this esteemed delegation. Today's meeting is an important symbol of collaboration between the African Union and the United Nations. It is also another concrete demonstration of our common commitment to work with the Sudanese people in addressing the serious challenges they face.

Today, the Panel will brief the Security Council on its report (S/2009/599, annex I), which has been adopted in its entirety by the African Union Peace and Security Council. The Peace and Security Council also established a High-Level Implementation Panel comprised of former Presidents Thabo Mbeki and Pierre Buyoya and retired General Abdulsalami Abubakar. We are privileged to receive their first-hand briefing.

The report of the High-Level Panel provides a frank assessment and insightful analysis of the situation in the Sudan and offers numerous proposals for the way forward. Perhaps above all, the Panel members have insisted on seeing the Sudan in its totality. They have clearly articulated the links between the crisis in Darfur and broader efforts to implement the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

Their insights come at a critical moment. In little more than three months, elections are scheduled to take place. In just over a year, the two referendums that will determine the future shape of the Sudan are scheduled to be held. The National Congress Party (NCP) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), as the two parties to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, have taken steps to prepare for these major events, but there is still much to be done. We must remember that neither the election nor the referendums are ends in themselves. Managing the results — whatever the outcome — will require genuine cooperation between the NCP and the SPLM.

In the meantime, violence, in South Sudan in particular, is occurring at a disturbing scale and frequency. In Darfur, the peace process has reached a critical point. Chief Mediator Djibril Bassolé has been working with the Government of Qatar to generate momentum by giving civil society a strong voice at the peace talks. Representatives of civil society and armed movements have agreed to resume consultations in Doha on 18 January 2010, which will be followed by

direct talks between the Government and the movements on 24 January 2010.

Efforts must continue to encourage the Government, and more especially the rebel movements, to make concessions and embrace the consensus that Mr. Bassolé is building. In my view, the High-Level Implementation Panel and the international community at large have a critical role to play here. By giving Mr. Bassolé our unequivocal support, we will send a strong message to all parties that they must engage in the negotiations that he is leading.

Beyond that, the Panel can make an invaluable contribution to the soft landing we are all working towards after the election and referendums by helping the parties to the CPA to bridge their differences. That is an outcome that is badly needed not only for the Sudan itself, but also for the Sudan's neighbours and, indeed, for all of Africa.

The High-Level Panel also addressed the difficult issues of justice and reconciliation in the Sudan. Its efforts to develop creative and pragmatic proposals are highly commendable. We must keep sight of the importance of compliance with resolution 1593 (2005), which refers the situation in Darfur to the International Criminal Court.

I have just concluded a very productive meeting with the visiting delegation, in the course of which we agreed on the importance of continuing close African Union-United Nations cooperation on the Sudan. Beyond our co-management of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, we must make every effort to ensure that the activities of the United Nations in the Sudan and the work of the African Union's High-Level Implementation Panel are mutually supportive.

It will be the Sudanese people who solve the Sudan's problems. But working together, the United Nations and the African Union can provide them with critical assistance on their difficult journey towards lasting peace and prosperity.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I now give the floor to Mr. Jean Ping, Chairperson of the African Union Commission.

Mr. Ping (*spoke in French*): At the outset, please allow me to express my sincere thanks to the President and members of the Security Council for having agreed to meet to discuss the report of the African Union High-Level Panel on Darfur (S/2009/599, annex I). That is an eloquent manifestation of this organ's interest in the situation in the Sudan and the efforts being made to help that country to address the numerous challenges it is facing.

I am pleased to take the floor today under the presidency of Burkina Faso — an African presidency, both committed and proactive — and I wish to congratulate you, Mr. President, and the representatives of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Uganda on having accomplished fruitful terms on the Council in the service, among other things, of the causes of Africa. I would also like to congratulate all the other representatives whose terms will conclude at the end of this month.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his commitment to peace, security, stability and development in Africa, as well as the trusting and promising cooperation that is developing between the United Nations and the African Union (AU).

Darfur occupies a special place in the efforts of our two organizations in favour of peace on the African continent. More than any other, that region symbolizes the unique nature of the links between the African Union and the United Nations, having provided the context and the theatre for the first hybrid operation between our two organizations. This pioneering experience encourages us to better coordinate our actions and to harmonize our respective cultures and practices to the imperatives of joint work whose objective circumstances leave us no other alternative. Certainly, it can sometimes seem to be frustrating, but we have no other choice than to persevere down this path.

In the Sudan, as in other situations of crisis and conflict on the African continent, the future will rely increasingly on joint action and united efforts on the basis of the respective comparative advantages of the United Nations, with its expertise and resources, and regional organizations, particularly the African Union, whose political will — reflected in the implementation of a continent-wide architecture of peace and security — geographic proximity and detailed knowledge of the situations at hand, constitute an undeniable asset and grant the required legitimacy to the actions undertaken.

As members of the Council know, the AU High-Level Panel on Darfur was established upon a decision adopted at a ministerial meeting of the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) on 21 July 2008 in order to consider and to make recommendations on the ways and means to better address issues related, on the one hand, to peace, reconciliation and pacification and, on the other, to justice, the fight against impunity and accountability.

By taking that decision, at the instigation of the African Union Commission, the PSC was convinced that the challenges of peace, justice and reconciliation in the Sudan were inseparable. While affirming that there could be no impunity for the flagrant violations of human rights committed in Darfur, the PSC also underscored the need to seek justice in a way that would facilitate achieving the goal of peace and reconciliation. Moreover, that is also the spirit of Security Council resolution 1593 (2005) on Darfur. Clearly, those issues cannot be divided. They must be dealt with together with the resolve to create a positive momentum and an add-on effect covering all the areas where there must be action.

The Panel carried out its mandate over a period of six months. Throughout that undertaking, it strove to interact with each of the stakeholders, whether Sudanese or international. It is significant that, even with regard to its recommendations, the Panel deemed it useful to keep the Sudanese and international actors informed so as, wherever possible, to ensure their acceptability and viability and to build the greatest possible consensus on the proposed way forward, taking due account of achievements such as the Darfur Peace Agreement, signed in Abuja in 2006, and the lessons learned from the efforts made to date through so much goodwill, African and non-African.

It is just as significant that, during its various visits to the Sudan, the Panel spent over 40 days in Darfur going not only to areas under Government control, but also to those controlled by the armed opposition movements. That approach, which gave the Panel and its report unequalled authority, was all the more necessary given the fact that, since the start of the war in Darfur, many people have claimed to speak on behalf of the people of Darfur. The populations of Darfur have rarely had the opportunity to speak for themselves.

I wanted to make these remarks to highlight two elements that seem to me essential. On the one hand, I am convinced that the conflict in Darfur is, first and foremost, a Sudanese problem and that its settlement will depend primarily on the Sudanese themselves, with the international community playing a supportive and supplementary role; on the other hand, the recommendations made by the Panel arise from the concerns of the Sudanese parties such as they have been able to harmonize and unify themselves, as far as possible, and not from some disengaged deconstruction of their realities that we might have sought to impose on them.

I would also like to add that the Panel configured a comprehensive approach based on the conviction that the aims of peace, justice and reconciliation in Darfur are closely linked and equally desirable. At the same time, the Panel highlighted the robust desire of the peoples of Darfur for peace and security. Nothing can express that aspiration better that the statement made by a nomad whom the Panel met in El Fasher in June 2009:

> "We want peace. If it is flying in the air, I am prepared to fly and catch it. If it is buried underground, I am prepared to dig to get it. If it is available in the market, I will find the money to buy it."

At the same time, as the Panel has underscored, all the Sudanese parties expressed their devotion to justice, respect for which will facilitate the pursuit of peace, given that justice and reconciliation are inextricably linked and must be tackled and implemented in a comprehensive and supportive way.

It is of the greatest importance to stress here that the conclusion that the Panel reached regarding the need to set any settlement of the Darfur crisis in the more global context of settling the crisis that has affected the Sudan ever since its independence, some of the causes of which go back to the colonial period. The fundamental inequality that characterizes the relationship between the Sudanese centre and hinterlands partly explains the various rebellions that the Sudan has experienced and continues to experience. That is why the Panel has rightly defined the crisis in Darfur as a manifestation of the wider crisis in the Sudan as both a country and a State.

Members are aware that the High-Level Panel's report and its recommendations were endorsed by the

PSC at its meeting held at the level of head of State and Government in Abuja on 29 October. The PSC also asked me to set up a High-Level Implementation Panel, comprising former Presidents Thabo Mbeki, Pierre Buyoya and Abdulsalami Abubakar, in order to facilitate the implementation of the recommendations made and to help the Sudanese parties to implement the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and other related processes as elements of the democratic transformation of the Sudan.

We have since undertaken a number of steps to implement the Panel's recommendations, which henceforth will be the platform for all the AU's action in the Sudan. In that context, the Implementation Panel went to the Sudan a few days ago. It met with all the stakeholders, who reaffirmed their support for the recommendations and the decision of the PSC. On the basis of that visit, the Panel drew up an action plan recommending activities to be systematically and diligently undertaken concerning both Darfur and the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

We have come to the United Nations to request its support in the belief that, with the Panel's report, the methodology on which it was based, the comprehensive character of its vision and recommendations, and the positive reactions of the Sudanese parties, including the Government of National Unity, today we have a suitable instrument to guide our efforts and to achieve our objectives.

Hence, today's meeting and the attitude that we expect of the Council are very important. It is also true that the success of our joint work in the Sudan will require this meeting to be more than a one-off event; rather, it must mark the launching of a process in a spirit of partnership in the service of peace, justice, security and reconciliation in the Sudan. I am sure that we are all aware of the fact that today is a turning point in the efforts of the international community to date to reach a settlement in Darfur and to support the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement so that the Sudan can experience a significantly new era in its history.

The situation is critical. The Sudan is on the eve of two major dates that will determine the future of the country and whose impact on that of Africa must not be underestimated. First are the general elections in April 2010, which ought to mark an important stage in the democratic transformation of the Sudan as envisaged by the January 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Following that, there is the self-determination referendum of January 2011, which in accordance with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement will enable the people of Southern Sudan to decide either to maintain the unity of the Sudan or to partition the country. It is obvious that the choice made will have considerable consequences for the Sudan and for the rest of Africa, just as it is obvious that the conditions and circumstances prevailing before, during and after these votes will have the greatest impact on the course and coherence of events.

For Africa, what is happening and what is at stake in the Sudan is of existential importance. The Sudan is the biggest country in Africa. It is a melting pot of the cultural, religious and ethnic diversity that characterizes Africa and that, far from being a handicap, is an advantage. The Sudan shares its borders with nine other African States, and they, more than any others, will be the first to suffer from the continuance of the current situation and even more from possible negative developments in the future.

By forming the High-level Panel and by working actively on the follow-up to its recommendations, the African Union, despite difficulties, setbacks, suffering and heartbreak, has affirmed its faith in the capacity of the Sudanese to live up to their historic responsibilities and to overcome their differences for the good of their country and for the good of Africa. A collective step forward is possible if inhibitions, the weight of the past and distractions do not continue to obscure the generous vision of the future that the African Union would like to popularize.

The mission entrusted to the African Union Panel is intended to promote a comprehensive approach to solving the crisis in the Sudan as well as the peaceful, democratic transformation of the country. This mission works harmoniously with the mandates of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, the Joint Mediation and the United Nations Mission in the Sudan, mandates whose implementation it is meant to facilitate, without overlapping tasks, duplicating work or contesting competencies. This sui generis mission responds to real needs and it will only strengthen the effectiveness, coherence and credibility of the international community's actions in the Sudan.

The Sudan needs to move forward, and Africa is determined to provide all necessary assistance, on the basis of the report of the African Union High-Level Panel, which has become the strategy and the source of inspiration for the activities of the African Union in the Sudan. We ask all our partners within the international community to lend their support to this unprecedented effort, remembering that the solutions that will produce the desired results are those with Sudanese ownership and Africa's support. The African Union trusts in the support of the United Nations in a beneficial endeavour whose success will honour the entire international community and shelter from the scourge of war many future generations in the Sudan, Africa and the world.

I thank the Council for its gracious attention, and I ask you, Mr. President, to invite President Mbeki to present the conclusions of the High-level Panel and the perspectives that point to the large-scale actions that we must undertake with the Sudanese and all the other actors in the best interest of everyone.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Ping for his briefing.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Thabo Mbeki, Chairperson of the African Union High-level Panel on Darfur.

Mr. Mbeki (African Union): First of all, we would like to join the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Mr. Jean Ping, in thanking you, Mr. President, and the Security Council, for giving us the opportunity to be here today to reflect on various matters relating to Sudan, starting with the report of the African Union High-Level Panel on Darfur (S/2009/599, annex I). Similarly, we join the Chairperson of the AU Commission in stressing the significance of the partnership between the AU and the United Nations, which was pioneered in Darfur in the form of both the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID)and the Joint Chief Mediator.

As Mr. Ping has indicated, the essence of the mandate of the AU High-level Panel on Darfur was to advise the African Union on what could be done to accelerate the advance towards peace, justice and reconciliation in Darfur. The Security Council is of course aware that at its meeting of 29 October, the AU Peace and Security Council reconstituted the AU High-Level Panel on Darfur as the African Union High-level Implementation Panel for Sudan. I mention this because much of what we will say will relate to the work of the Implementation Panel, whose mandate, again as mentioned by the Chairperson of the AU Commission, is

> "to assist in the implementation of all aspects of the AU Panel on Darfur recommendations, as well as to assist the Sudanese parties in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and other related processes, as part of the democratic transformation of Sudan".

We are certain that the members of the Security Council are familiar both with the AU High-level Panel report and its recommendations and with the decisions of the AU Peace and Security Council in that regard. We will therefore not discuss the report in detail, but will rather offer what we consider to be a few salient observations. Of course, if the Council should require us to comment on any detail in the report, we will do so.

Drawing on its collective experience, the AU Panel understood that a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Darfur could only be achieved through a negotiated agreement amongst the Sudanese themselves. In other words, we proceeded from the position that it was neither possible nor desirable to impose a Darfur solution on the Sudanese people. We mention this important point at this stage because it helped to inform both the modus operandi of the AU Panel and the report it ultimately submitted to the AU Peace and Security Council. With regard to that modus operandi, the AU Panel decided to engage the Sudanese stakeholders, and especially the Darfurians, in an extensive process of consultations, essentially to understand what they themselves thought might be done to accelerate the process towards peace, justice and reconciliation in Darfur. Further, to conclude this process of consultations, we also presented our draft recommendations to the same Darfur and Sudan constituencies to solicit their opinions on the recommendations.

Arising out of all this, we are happy to inform the Security Council that, in our view, the AU Panel report and recommendations broadly reflect the views of the major stakeholders in Sudan and Darfur about what needs to be done speedily to achieve the objectives that I have stated. We believe that this is of major practical importance, because it underlines the objective reality that a broad consensus exists in Darfur and in Sudan as

a whole which should facilitate the critically important negotiations to end the conflict in Darfur.

Just over a week ago, we visited Sudan, and the AU High-Level Implementation Panel had occasion to meet with, among others, a broad spectrum of the leadership of Darfur civil society. Those leaders emphasized exactly this point: that, to use their words, the situation in Darfur was ripe effectively to accelerate the peace process. We must also mention the fact that after interactions with other Sudanese stakeholders since the report of the AU Panel was published and endorsed by the Peace and Security Council, we can say firmly that the major Sudanese constituencies broadly support the report and its recommendations.

Members of the Security Council will also be aware that, in our report, we insisted on everything being done to enable the people of Darfur to participate in both the 2010 general elections and any national dialogue that might take place around the critical issue of the 2011 South Sudan referendum. For this reason, we thought it was important that the Darfur negotiations be concluded before the impending general elections.

We attached a great deal of importance to this because we were concerned that, should the people of Darfur feel excluded in any way from both the elections and the consideration of matters relating to the referendum, this would serve to underline their marginalization and disempowerment, which were a central cause of the armed uprising that started in 2003.

In this context, we would like to reiterate our view that, first, a broad consensus exists in Darfur and Sudan on the various elements that would constitute what we described as a global political agreement on Darfur; secondly, the people of Darfur insist that a negotiated peace should be concluded as quickly as possible; and thirdly, it is both possible and necessary that this objective be achieved without much delay.

Here, I should also confirm that, like the AU Panel during its short lifespan, the African Union High-level Implementation Panel is ready to assist the Joint Chief Mediator to achieve this outcome. This means that, among other things, the Panel will engage the various parties in Darfur and the Sudan to encourage them to respond positively and expeditiously to such initiatives as would be taken by the Joint Chief Mediator.

Yet another matter I would like to underline is the important reality, mentioned by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, that the three objectives of peace, justice and reconciliation are interconnected and interdependent. We are thus convinced that the positive outcome we all seek with regard to Darfur will have to take the form of an integrated package that achieves the necessary balance among the various objectives of peace, justice and reconciliation.

We are convinced that any attempt to emphasize the importance of any of these three objectives at the expense of the others would not bring about the just and stable peace we all desire for the people of Darfur and which the Darfurians themselves seek. This is one of the considerations that informed the manner in which we composed our recommendations, and we believe that these will help the Sudanese negotiators to arrive at the necessarily integrated package to which we have referred.

In this context, we must mention the fact that Sudan is not the first African country to be faced with the challenge of finding the necessary balance in addressing the interrelated issues of peace, justice and reconciliation. Therefore, if necessary, beyond considering the decisions taken by the AU Peace and Security Council in this regard, the negotiators of the Darfur agreement could draw on this wider African experience. Indeed, I must say, the Darfurians kept referring to that.

Members of the Security Council will also have taken note of the fact that the AU Panel underlined that the conflict in Darfur, as was the case with the conflicts in South and Eastern Sudan, is a manifestation of a general Sudan crisis. We explained that this Sudan crisis was of long standing, encompassing both the colonial and post-colonial periods. It arose, again as the Chairperson of the African Union Commission has said, essentially from the concentration of power and wealth in an elite centred in Khartoum, resulting in the marginalization, impoverishment and underdevelopment of the so-called periphery, including Darfur.

Furthermore, this unequal distribution of power and wealth made it imperative that the centre should, to the extent possible, deny the rest of the country the democratic right to elect a Government of their choice, among other rights. The Darfurians themselves insisted that this historical legacy was the root cause of the violent conflict in Darfur. From this, it follows that the

solution of the conflict in Darfur should be located within the context of addressing that legacy.

It is therefore self-evident that the resolution of the conflict in Darfur, like those in South and Eastern Sudan, cannot but necessitate the restructuring of Sudan as a whole in order to address the historical legacy, the consequence of which has been the various conflicts that have afflicted Sudan for many decades.

Accordingly, the Implementation Panel will work closely with the people of Sudan as they strive to give effect to a stated common resolve to build what has been described as the new Sudan. As with any process that seeks to achieve the fundamental restructuring of any society, the creation of that new Sudan, explained in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement as making unity attractive, is and has been difficult and challenging. Because of this, the Sudanese people need all the support they can get to help them achieve this objective. We therefore hope that the United Nations will also do what it can in this regard.

As the Security Council is aware, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement gives the opportunity for the people of South Sudan to opt for independence, which might suggest that once the South has seceded, if this is the outcome of the 2011 referendum, the historical power relations in North Sudan could remain unchanged. In our interactions with the population in Darfur, there was no serious suggestion that this region of Sudan sought to follow South Sudan with regard to the issue of self-determination. We make this point to emphasize that the implementation of a just Darfur peace agreement necessarily implies the transformation of Sudan in the manner we have indicated, including the democratization of the country.

Because of the central importance of this process of democratization to the resolution of the Sudan crisis, as indicated in the mandate of our High-level Implementation Panel, we will act to encourage the Sudanese parties to create a climate conducive to free and fair elections and to conduct the 2010 general elections in such a manner that all the people of Sudan can freely elect legislatures and Governments of their choice.

It is commonly agreed that this is vitally important in the context of both the fundamental restructuring of Sudan, to which we have referred, and the need to ensure that the 2011 referendum is handled by a democratically elected Government. Again, it is a matter of common agreement that the will of the people of South Sudan should be respected, whatever the outcome of the referendum. In this context, the Sudanese parties have recognized the fact that they must engage one another on the vital matter of the consequences of the referendum, regardless of its outcome.

Accordingly, and, again, as the Security Council knows, the South Sudan referendum law requires that the parties engage in discussions to consider all the relevant post-referendum issues. Once again, our Implementation Panel will work with these parties to contribute what it can to the consideration of these post-referendum issues, in part to help ensure that Sudan sustains the peace that was brought about by the Comprehensive Peace Agreement — once more, regardless of the outcome of the referendum.

We share the belief that the people of Sudan, in both the North and the South, are very keen to live in conditions of peace, even if South Sudan elects to be an independent State. The Implementation Panel will therefore do everything it can to focus on the issue of peace, among other ways by considering the situation along the North-South border and making the necessary and relevant recommendations to the Sudanese parties.

We should perhaps have mentioned earlier the continuing challenge to the implementation of all the outstanding agreements contained in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. By agreement with the National Congress Party and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement, the Panel will interact with these two parties to the CPA to help accelerate the process towards the completion of the agenda detailed in the Agreement.

As indicated in the AU Panel's report, we consider the normalization of relations between Sudan and its neighbours to be of vital importance with regard to the achievement of the goal of a peaceful and stable Sudan. Accordingly, we have been greatly encouraged by the steps taken by the Governments of Chad and Sudan to reduce and end the tensions between the two countries. The African Union Panel has engaged both Governments on this matter, and the Implementation Panel will follow up on this and will resume its interaction with the other neighbouring countries.

As we carry out this work, we will be very mindful of the critical importance of Sudan to its

neighbours and the rest of our continent — again, as the Chairperson of the African Union Commission has said. It is self-evident that Sudan, which shares borders with nine other countries in a volatile part of Africa, should serve as a force for peace, stability and development both in the region and in Africa as a whole.

Earlier, we mentioned the groundbreaking partnership between the AU and the United Nations, which resulted in the establishment of UNAMID. As UNAMID approaches the second anniversary of its establishment, at the end of this month, we would like to pay tribute to the extraordinary dedication and courage of the men and women who are serving in Darfur under challenging conditions, as well as to commend the Mission. It is obvious that in addition to the work it has done already, UNAMID will be required to take on additional tasks once the Darfur global political agreement is concluded. We therefore hope that the necessary steps will be taken to ensure that it has the necessary capacity to carry out all its tasks.

In this context, we would like to congratulate Mr. Ibrahim Gambari on his assumption of the high position of Joint Special Representative in Darfur; we look forward to working with him as closely as possible.

The AU Panel was privileged to have regular interactions with both UNAMID and the United Nations Mission in the Sudan, as well as with the special envoys of countries members of the Security Council and the European Union. The Implementation Panel will strive to sustain this interaction, as we believe that concerted international action is required effectively to respond to the urgent challenges that Sudan faces.

The Panel is conscious of the reality of the extensive nature of its mandate and therefore the work it must carry out. It is similarly alert to the fact that it has to act within a very short time frame, given the fact of the impending general elections and the South Sudan referendum.

However, objective reality dictates that the matters we have mentioned — the resolution of the conflict in Darfur, the CPA and North-South relations, the democratization of Sudan and the normalization of relations in the neighbourhood — should be addressed simultaneously and as a matter of urgency. The Implementation Panel will do its best to respond to this challenge.

Once more, we thank the Security Council for giving us the opportunity to make a brief presentation on the issues we have mentioned and hope that the Council will favour us and our continent with its support, resulting in the further strengthening of the partnership between the African Union and the United Nations.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Chairperson of the African Union High-level Panel on Darfur for his briefing.

There are no further speakers on my list. In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I how invite Council members to a private debate to continue the discussion of the subject. I request delegations that have not requested to participate in the private debate to be kind enough to leave the Chamber.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.